

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

Architectural Inventory Form

Official Eligibility Determination (OAH use only)

- Date _____ Initials _____
- Determined Eligible – National Register
- Determined Not Eligible – National Register
- Determined Eligible – State Register
- Determine Not Eligible – State Register
- Need Data
- Contributes to eligible National Register District
- Noncontributing to eligible National Register District

I. IDENTIFICATION

- 1. Resource number: **5RT.248** Parcel number(s): **145015008**
- 2. Temporary resource number: **N/A**
- 3. County: **Routt**
- 4. City: **Steamboat Springs**
- 5. Historic Building Name: **F.M. Light and Sons Store**
- 6. Current Building Name: **F.M. Light and Sons Store**
- 7. Building Address: **830 Lincoln Avenue**
- 8. Owner Name: **Remnant Investors, LLLP/ Tyrone R. Lockhart**
- Owner Organization:
- Owner Address: **830 Lincoln Avenue**
Steamboat Springs, CO 80487



44. National Register eligibility field assessment:	Not Eligible
Local landmark eligibility field assessment:	Eligible

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II. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

9. P.M.: **6th** Township: **6N** Range: **84W**
NW ¼ of NE ¼ of NE ¼ of NW ¼ of Section 17
10. UTM reference (Datum: NAD27)
 Zone: **13** **344498 mE** **4483191 mN**
11. USGS quad name: **Steamboat Springs, Colorado**
 Year: **1969** Map scale: **7.5**
12. Lot(s): **Lot 8 Block 15**
 Addition: **Original Addition of Steamboat Springs** Year of addition: **1884**
13. Boundary description and justification:
This legally defined parcel encompasses, but does not exceed, the land historically associated with this property.
 Metes and bounds?: Describe:

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

14. Building plan (footprint, shape): **Rectangular Plan**
15. Dimensions in feet: **Length: 140 feet x Width: 50 feet**
16. Number of stories: **1**
17. Primary external wall material(s): **Wood/Shingle**
18. Roof configuration: **Flat Roof**
19. Primary external roof material: **Asphalt Roof/Composition Roof**
20. Special features: **N/A**
21. General architectural description:
The F.M. Light & Sons Building is a single story commercial structure located near the northwest end of the 800 block of Lincoln Avenue in downtown Steamboat Springs. The building measures 50' NW-SE (across) by 14' NE-SW (deep), and its façade fronts directly onto the wide concrete sidewalk paralleling Lincoln Avenue on the southwest elevation. The asymmetrical façade comprises a single storefront for the F.M. Light & Sons store. A set of paired stained natural brown wood-paneled doors, with side lights and a transom light, enter the store from within a deeply recessed entryway which is offset toward the northwest side of the façade. The entryway is flanked on either side by large expanses of single-light fixed-pane storefront display windows, with painted dark brown wood frames. The windows are divided by painted dark brown fluted wood columns, while the kick plate areas below the windows are finished with a sandstone veneer. Wooden columns, clad with variegated wood shingles, appear at either end of the lower portion of the façade. The upper portion of the façade is formed by an applied façade surface which projects slightly out over the sidewalk. The upper façade is clad with variegated wood shingles, while a wooden dentil course appears at the top of the façade wall. An open wood balustrade, with turned balusters, extends above the flat roof line above the top of the façade wall. A large wooden signband, with painted black letters on a painted yellow background, is affixed to the upper façade wall. The sign advertises "F.M. Light & Sons Outfittin' the West for 100 Years...and 5 Generations." Smaller, back-to-back, wooden signs, also with painted black lettering on painted yellow backgrounds, hang from the underside of the roof extension in front of the recessed entryway. These two signs advertise "F.M. Light & Sons Established 1905." The phrase "Established 1905" is also etched in white lettering in the transom light above the entry doors.

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A plaque with the following text is affixed to the northwest side of the façade wall:

F.M. Light and Sons

F.M. Light & Sons Clothing Store was constructed on this site in 1905. The original building was 25 ft. wide by 50 ft. with wooden floors. Bricks made locally, just north of Fish Creek, were used for wall construction. Family members traveled a wide area showing merchandise and taking orders from ranchers. Light was instrumental in widening the main street and adjoining sidewalks.

Tread of Pioneers Museum

Plaque Program, 1994

The southeast half of the rear (northeast) elevation is made of painted beige concrete blocks. The northwest half of the rear elevation is made of painted beige poured concrete, or possibly concrete pargeting over concrete block construction. A painted beige, metal-clad, service door enters the rear elevation. The upper portion of the southeast (side) elevation, which is made of wire-cut red bricks, is visible above the adjacent Allen's Clothing building at 828 Lincoln Avenue. The northwest side of this building abuts the Maxwell/ Squire Building at 842 Lincoln Avenue.

22. Architectural style: **Twentieth Century Commercial Style**
 Building type:
23. Landscape or special setting features: **This building is located on the northeast side of the 800 block of Lincoln Avenue, in downtown Steamboat Springs. Allen's Clothing at 828 Lincoln Avenue abuts this building on its southeast elevation. The Maxwell/ Squire Building at the eastern corner of Lincoln Avenue and 9th Street abuts this building on its northwest elevation.**
24. Associated buildings, features or objects: **Not Applicable**

IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

25. Date of construction: Estimate: Actual: **1905**
 Source of information: **Façade plaque; Sanborn Insurance map, 1911; Routt County Assessor Commercial Property Appraisal Record**
26. Architect: **Unknown**
 Source of information: **N/A**
27. Builder: **Unknown**
 Source of information: **N/A**
28. Original owner: **F.M. Light**
 Source of information: **Façade Plaque**

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29. Construction history:

Sanborn Insurance maps and early issues of the Steamboat Pilot reveal that Lot 8 in Block 15 of Steamboat Springs original townsite was developed with the construction of two buildings during the first decade of the twentieth century. The building on the west half of the lot measured 25 feet across by 50 feet deep, and was constructed as the F.M. Light and Sons clothing store in 1905. The building on the east half of the lot also measured 25 feet across, but was somewhat longer than the Light's clothing store next door. Known early on as the Meunch Building, the building on the east half of the lot was historically used as a grocery store. Boy's Market, operated by the Heid family, was located here for a number of years. The F.M. Light and Son store expanded into the former grocery store space, and designed a single fifty feet wide storefront to cover both buildings, in 1952. The façade was redesigned again, to its current appearance, in the 1970s.

30. Original location: Moved: _____ Date of move(s): **N/A**

V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

31. Original use(s): **Commerce and Trade/Specialty Store**

Commerce and Trade/Grocery Store

32. Intermediate use(s): **Commerce and Trade/Specialty Store**

33. Current use(s): **Commerce and Trade/Specialty Store**

34. Site type(s): **Single-story commercial building.**

35. Historical background:

In 1905, Francis Marion (Frank) Light brought his wife and seven children to Steamboat Springs, establishing one of Colorado's best known business enterprises. Light, a native of Ohio, was at one time a teacher, before turning to farming to support his large family. He reportedly had a life-long dream to have his own business, and read everything he could on various business approaches and case histories. After saving for twenty years, in March, 1905 Light and his family headed west, both to seek relief from asthma and to realize his dream.

The Light family, which consisted of his wife and seven children, sons Clarence W., Olin F., Emerson Day, and R. Wayne, and daughters Hazel, Marie, and Audrey, took the Rio Grande Railroad as far west as Wolcott, 78 miles south of Steamboat Springs. The family then undertook a two-day journey to Steamboat by stagecoach, finally arriving here on April 2, 1905. Three days later, Light paid Yampa resident William C. Crowner \$850 for two 100-foot lots near Soda Creek, at what is today 204 Park Avenue. Shortly thereafter, he hired carpenters Tom and Elmer Baer to build an 18 x 36 foot building. (This building later became the family's horse barn, and then a garage.) For the first four years of their life in Steamboat, the nine members of the Light family lived in this building, with no sewer, no electricity, and no running water.

At the time, Steamboat Springs was a small town serving only a few hundred people, with sporadic mail service and no rail line. Looking for a good business opportunity, Light soon decided to open a men's shoe and clothing store. As one Pilot article describes it, "Up to this time, Light had never been behind a store counter, nor inside the doors of a wholesale house or factory." From his readings, Light gleaned his winning formula: "The best location was within 75 feet of an intersection; the easier it was for people to enter a store, the more customers the store would have; and, every purchase should be paid for in cash." Light located and purchased this lot on

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Lincoln Avenue, and set about building a 25 x 50 foot store. Stocked with \$2,000 worth of merchandise, the F. M. Light store opened for business on November 9, 1905. Initially, the store's wares consisted primarily of shoes, freighted in by wagon from the railroad stop at Wolcott. Store records show that the first customer was Robert M. Van Deusen. Reportedly, the store brought in \$11.50 on the first day, and the second day's receipts were even less.

Despite this bleak outlook, Light and his two oldest sons, Clarence and Olin, persevered. (A third son, E. Day, was only 1 year old at the time. He took on an active role in the firm in 1923.) Their success was due in large measure to three hallmarks: hard work, integrity, and innovative marketing practices. F. M. Light recognized the value of keeping his name uppermost in the minds of his potential customers. From the very first day, he never missed running an ad in any issue of the *Steamboat Pilot*. In 1928, Clarence Light devised a new means of advertising that cemented the firm's name in the minds of thousands of travelers: he made use of the then uncommon roadside sign. That year, Clarence and his brothers erected 260 black and yellow signs in a 150 mile radius of Steamboat Springs. Eventually, the number of signs grew to 300. The results were truly remarkable. Travelers throughout Colorado, Utah and Wyoming were well-acquainted with the store and its wares long before arriving in town. More than merely advertising the business, the signs generated anticipation in the motoring public, virtually guaranteeing that every traveler passing through Steamboat Springs would stop. Over the years, the store became famous nationwide for these signs, several of which were written in rhyme, emulating Burma Shave ads. Despite their popularity, during the 1970s and 1980s, the signs were challenged by environmentalists, and more than half were removed. A store brochure from the early 1980s stated, "The biggest challenges in keeping the road signs up have been cows and environmentalists. After 40 years, we've figured out how to outsmart the cows by using 2 x 4's; but after fighting environmentalists and the government bureaucracy, we've discovered that 2 x 4's don't work well with them. The road signs will have to be taken down shortly." Fortunately, many still remain, today recognized as historic icons. Each spring, continuing a tradition dating back to the business' early days, Light family members spend two weeks refurbishing and repainting the road signs.

Around 1930, the Lights implemented their famous "stores on wheels," traveling salesmen who would drive specially modified trucks, equipped with shelves, hangers, and merchandise, to outlying ranches and communities. In doing so, they took their merchandise directly to their best customers, the ranchers, sheep men and farmers. Soon, F. M. Light salesmen were covering a 1,000 square mile area. Sons Clarence and Olin were alternating weeks on the road, traveling as far north as Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and as far west as Utah. According to Clarence Light, quoted in a 1980s store brochure, "Twice each year (3 times in good years), our company representative, armed with an abundance of samples, called on hundreds of homes throughout the area. Most of the selling in the territory was done with the aid of two trucks. The trucks were practically traveling stores. They were paneled trucks affording space for a great deal of sample merchandise. Included in the sample stocks were representative items from virtually every line and price range carried in regular stock and a good many specially made items on which orders were solicited."

Fully half of the store's business was secured in this manner. Few actual sales were made from the trucks. Instead, the Lights combined their innovative stores on wheels with a very large mail-order business. Orders were taken and mailed to the store every day so they could be filled and shipped immediately. The plan was for the salesman to spend the night at a ranch, getting to know the family and hired men. The company always insisted upon paying for lodging when visiting customers. This "scheme," according to Clarence Light in 1934, often resulted in sales of \$100 or more.

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Upon F. M. Light's death in 1937, the store was taken over by Clarence, Olin and E. Day. Olin Light retired from the business in 1954, and for many years operated a women's ready-to-wear shop known as Olin's. Day passed away unexpectedly in 1963, leaving the business solely to Clarence. In 1964, Clarence's daughter Annabeth and son-in-law Lloyd Lockhart bought the business. Maintaining the family tradition, they soon enlisted the help of their son, Tyrone R. (Ty) Lockhart in managing the firm. Clarence Light continued to take an active role in the day to day operations, and as late as 1974, when he was 87 years old, he was still taking merchandise to customers. Ty's brother, Del joined the company in 1979. Today, more than 100 years after the store's founding, Ty's son, Brandon is the fifth generation to be associated with this true western icon.

36. Sources of information:

Alexandroff, Marty. "Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Architectural Inventory Form." February 1996, on file with the City of Steamboat Springs, and the Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

"F. M. Light & Sons to Celebrate Golden Anniversary Of Being In Clothing Business In Steamboat." Steamboat Springs Pilot, November 3, 1955.

Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Routt County, Colorado, Precinct 1, Steamboat Springs.

Klein, Naomi. "Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Inventory Record." May 1981, on file with the City of Steamboat Springs, and the Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

"Pioneer Firm Observes Anniversary: F. M. Light and Sons Store Celebrates 47 Years in Business Here This Week." Steamboat Springs Pilot, November 13, 1952.

Routt County Assessor, Commercial Property Appraisal Record.

Sanborn Insurance maps for Steamboat Springs, July 1911, June 1920.

Since 1905." F. M. Light & Sons company brochure. n.d (c. 1983). From historical society vertical files.

"Steamboat Springs, Co. About 1910." Plat map, on file at the Tread of Pioneers Museum.

Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Routt County, Colorado, Precinct 1, Steamboat Springs.

Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Routt County, Colorado, Precinct 1, Steamboat Springs.

Untitled article excerpting information from the book *My First Eighty-One Years*, by R. Wayne Light. From Tread of Pioneers vertical files, n.d.

Web page <http://fmlight.com/history/>. 2007.

1905 – 1972: F. M. Light & Sons Celebrate 67th Year."

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VI. SIGNIFICANCE

37. Local landmark designation: Yes No Date of designation:

Designating authority:

38. Applicable National Register criteria:

A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history;

B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;

C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguished entity whose components may lack individual distinction;

D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Qualifies under Criteria Considerations A through G (see Manual).

Does not meet any of the above National Register criteria.

Steamboat Springs Standards for Designation:

A. Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of Routt County, the State of Colorado, or the United States.

Not Applicable B. Its location as a site of a significant historic event.

C. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of Routt County.

D. Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social, or historic heritage of Routt County.

Not Applicable E. Its portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

Not Applicable F. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.

Not Applicable G. Its identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of Routt County.

Not Applicable H. Its embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, materials, and/or craftsmanship that represent a significant architectural innovation.

Not Applicable I. Its relationship to other distinctive areas that are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on an historic, cultural, or architectural motif.

J. Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, a community, or Routt County.

39. Area(s) of significance: **Not Applicable**

40. Period of significance: **Not Applicable**

41. Level of significance: National: State: Local:

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42. Statement of significance:

This building is historically significant for its long continuous use as the F.M. Light and Sons clothing store. A Steamboat Springs icon, as of 2007, F.M. Light and Son's has been located here for 102 consecutive years. As such, F.M. Light and Sons in this building has made a significant contribution to Steamboat Spring's commercial development for more than a century. Due to some loss of integrity the building may be considered ineligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places and in the State Register of Historic Properties. It may, however, be considered individually eligible for inclusion in the Routt County Historic Register.

43. Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance:

This building displays a marginal standard of physical integrity, relative to the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service and the Colorado Historical Society, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation - setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The two historic buildings at this location were combined into a single storefront in the early 1950s; however, these changes occurred more than fifty years ago and are now historically significant in their own right. The building's historic integrity, though, has been diminished by more recent façade changes which occurred in the 1970s. Nonetheless, because F.M. Light and Sons remains in business, a sense of time and place of the store that existed here in the 1950s remains in evidence.

VII. NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: **Not Eligible**

Local landmark eligibility field assessment: **Eligible**

45. Is there National Register district potential? Yes No

Discuss: **Historic buildings in the core area of downtown Steamboat Springs may collectively possess the historical and/or architectural significance, and display sufficient physical integrity, to comprise a National Register historic district**

If there is National Register district potential, is this building: Contributing Noncontributing N/A:

46. If the building is in existing National Register district, is it: Contributing Noncontributing N/A:

VIII. RECORDING INFORMATION

47. Photograph number(s): **CD #5; Images 101, 102; CD #6; Images 108, 109, CD #7; Image 122** CDs filed at: **City of Steamboat Springs**

48. Report title: **Historic Building Inventory of Downtown Steamboat Springs** **137 10th Street**

49. Date(s): **08/08/07** **Steamboat Springs, CO 80477**

50. Recorder(s): **Carl McWilliams**
Karen McWilliams

51. Organization: **Cultural Resource Historians**

52. Address: **1607 Dogwood Court**
Fort Collins, CO 80525

53. Phone number(s): **(970) 493-5270**

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Sketch Map



Architectural Inventory Form

Location Map

